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ABSTRACT

This report describes the delivery of adult basic education/general educational development (ABE/GED) materials through a local newspaper. The materials, 24 English and math lessons developed by the Vineland (New Jersey) Adult Education Center and later distributed by Project Rural in Centre County, Pennsylvania, were published by the "Valley News Dispatch," which serves parts of Allegheny, Butler, Indiana, and Westmoreland counties, Pennsylvania. An introduction discusses the objectives: to reach a potential audience, to "tease" people through the published lessons to enroll in classes, to individualize the study by facilitating independent study, and to make the public aware of adult education. A diary of the 310 project follows. It explains the methods and time frame involved in the initial contact with the newspaper, advance publicity for the project, involvement of two local community libraries as hosts for dial-a-teacher and individual tutoring services, publication of the lessons, reader response and community reaction to the lessons, telephone survey, and culmination of the project in a free, practice test. An evaluation of the project reports that the project successfully met all of its objectives, although individualizing the approach was not effective for all students. (Project correspondence is appended.) (YLB)

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ED253752

NEWSPAPER DELIVERY OF ABE/GED CURRICULUM MATERIALS

New 310 Special Project: 98-4012
Grantor: Pennsylvania Department of Education
Grantee: ARIN Intermediate Unit #28
P. O. Box 175
Shelocta, PA 15774

Final Report

and

Final Product

prepared by

Kitty Lenz, Teacher
ARIN Adult Learning Center
Indiana, PA 15701

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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June 30, 1984

CE040787

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The statistical findings, general success, and evaluation of this program will be made available through the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Project AdvancE at the Resource Center in Harrisburg. Copies will also be available upon request from the ARIN Adult Learning Center.

ABSTRACT

This report describes the delivery of ABE/GED materials through a local newspaper, the Valley News Dispatch, that serves the Allegheny-Kiski Valley and which includes parts of the following counties: Allegheny, Butler, Indiana, and Westmoreland. The materials disseminated were 24 English and Math lessons developed by the Vineland, New Jersey, Adult Education Center[1] and later distributed by Project Rural in Centre County, PA.[2]

This report explains the methods and time frame involved in the initial contact with the newspaper; the advance publicity for the project; the involvement of two local community libraries as hosts for both dial-a-teacher and individual tutoring services; the publication of the lessons themselves; the reader response and community reaction to the lessons; telephone survey; and the culmination of the project in a free practice test.

This was a special demonstration project and addressed the first objective of Section 310 of the 1978 Adult Education Act (P.L. 95-561) which states: Expand outreach to those adults most underserved.

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[1] "Never Too Late!", Newspaper High School Preparation Course, Vineland Adult Education Center, 512 South 7th Street, Vineland, New Jersey, 18360.

[2] This was through the public service project by the Centre Daily Times, 400 E. College Avenue, State College, PA, William Welch, Editor.

INTRODUCTION

With 49% of Pennsylvania's adults over 25 not having a high school diploma, there definitely exists a need for adult education classes; however, often those same adults are the ones who "shy away" from schooling. Perhaps if lessons were taken to them -through the daily newspaper -there might be more success. This was the rationale which prompted the ARIN Adult Learning Center to seek funding and the cooperation of a local newspaper in sponsoring a 310 Special Demonstration Project: Newspaper Delivery of ABE/GED Curriculum Materials.

The objectives were, then, to reach a potential audience the existing ARIN classes hadn't drawn; to "tease" people through the published lessons to enroll in classes; to individualize the approach by allowing and facilitating an independent study -on their own, at their own pace, in their own home -and by offering free tutoring at public and community libraries; to make the public aware of adult education in general, and, specifically, ARIN's offerings.[3]

ARIN first approached the Indiana Evening Gazette, Indiana, in June, 1983 (ATTACHMENT 1). After consideration, however, the Gazette notified ARIN in October that it could not commit the time or space to the project. Next, a staff member presented

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[3] These objectives are further discussed on page 9 of this report.

the project to the Valley News Dispatch, Tarentum. After studying the idea and the copy, Mr. Paul Hess, Managing Editor, stated that he liked the idea and wanted his paper to do it, but not until the Spring of 1984 (March-May) (See ATTACHMENT 2). After gaining approval for an extension from the Special Project Advisor in Harrisburg, definite plans were made to run the first lesson on Monday, March 5 (See ATTACHMENT 3). A preliminary announcement and registration coupon would precede this. (See Final Product)

Sue Allan, ARIN Coordinator of Adult Services, served as Project Director; Kitty Lenz, teaching staff member, conducted the actual work of the project; and ARIN Adult Learning Center secretary Sherree Ashbaugh, provided all the secretarial services.

This report is being filed with the Special Project Advisor, Division of Adult Basic Education, Bureau of Vocational Education, Department of Education, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17108.

DIARY OF A 310 PROJECT
by Kitty Lenz

Sept., 1983	Sue Allan asked at staff in-service meeting if anyone was interested in pursuing a newspaper delivery of lessons for this area. I said "Yes."
Oct., 1983	Contacted Paul Hess of Valley News Dispatch. Dropped proposal and master copy of lessons at his office. Later -he likes it; wants to do it; but this time before Christmas is bad. Said he'd write a letter commiting the paper to doing it in March if that would help to get an extension. He'll send it to Sue. (ATTACHMENT 2)
Feb. 15, 1984	Sue and I met with Paul Hess to agree on time table and promotional articles, coupon.
Feb. 16	Worked on preparing article for newspaper. Contacted libraries for dial-a-teacher and tutoring space -Freeport would be Tuesday evening, and Tarentum would be Thursday afternoon. Called former students for possible "success story" on Paul Hess' suggestion. Called area high schools to see about existing Adult Education classes for article. Very positive reaction from libraries and schools. Encouraging!
Feb. 17	Met with Paul Hess to go over copy -including Vineland, "Never Too Late!". He'll have to cut original for printing. I said "OK" -hope it is. Met with principal at Freeport Junior High School to discuss using it as site for Practice Test. (ATTACHMENT 4-5)
Feb. 21	Called Freeport superintendent about sending flyers home with elementary students to promote course. "OK". Paul Hess called to confirm March 5 as starting date and February 23 as tentative date to begin promotional ad.
Feb. 22-24	Contacted New Kensington-Arnold and Highlands superintendents for permission to put flyer throughout elementaries in their districts. New Kensington's Mr. Capizzi (Elem. Coordinator) said "No" but will have it announced in all schools; Dr. Starsenic, "Yes". Made and reproduced flyers- 2,000 to Highlands, 1,020 to Freeport; 20 to New Kensington.

Feb. 25	Actual date initial coupon was published.
Feb. 27	Delivered flyers to all schools -secretary at Highlands thinks this a "wonderful way to help people get their diploma."
Feb. 28	Second registration coupon appeared in paper. So far, 20 registrations have been sent to ARIN.
March 5	99 coupons so far -good response! The first English (spelling) lesson was in tonight. I called Paul Hess with information on coupons returned.
March 6	Freeport Library -one call about GED Test.
March 7	Two new students at Freeport class as result of newspaper.
March 8	Tarentum Library -2 calls and one to tutor.
March 12	Two more new students in Freeport class -good publicity.
March 13	Freeport Library -One inquiry about GED materials to librarian.
March 15	Tarentum -One call about copying lessons student missed; one call for advice; one student to tutor.
March 16	Mr. Hess called about numbers of coupons returned. Said the newspaper gets a call or two every day about the course. Called Sue Allan. Used all the forms so far and has run out of stamps for the information packet return envelopes. She estimates close to 250 coupons have been received. Sherree is completing list of names and will send it.
March 19	One call at home inquiring about GED packet of free information. Called testers at Butler, Highlands and Valley High Schools about their GED testing schedule for end of May, beginning June. Mr. Preisser of Valley offered to come at time of Practice Test to answer any questions, offer any advice to students. He thinks this newspaper course is "great."
March 20	Freeport Library -One call from older woman (70) at highrise.."Am I being foolish?" she wanted to know. (Mary D. later passed her test!)

March 22	Tarentum -one student to tutor. Called Mr. Hess about coupon for Practice Test -should be in newspaper May 7.
March 27	Freeport Library.
March 29	Tarentum Library -one student.
April 3	Freeport Library -Call about past lessons from South Buffalo resident who was away until recently. Will stop next week.
April 5	Tarentum Library -Four new students plus one old one; one call. (Weather improving and math lessons are getting harder!)
April 10	Freeport Library -one student; one call.
April 12	Tarentum Library -one phone call; one student. Four from last week have joined the Freeport Class. Compiled statistics on 244 coupons and packets mailed by county: Allegheny -86; Westmoreland -84; Armstrong -58; Butler -16, 100 men; 144 women. 92 Student Intake Registration Forms were returned from packets: Allegheny -34; Westmoreland -34; Armstrong -22; Butler -4; Indiana -1. Two requests were made from guidance counselors. From this varied response across counties, it became necessary for the Program Director to contact other ABE/GED program directors and testers for possible referrals. Class and Test Sites in other areas were advertised in our newspaper column. The typical newspaper course enrollee is a 35 year old woman who quit school in the 10th grade and wants her diploma to get a better job.
April 17	Freeport Library -one student.
April 19	Tarentum Library -one student. Loretta is a school janitor and is really grateful for day classes -otherwise she couldn't attend anywhere.
April 24	Freeport Library -one student.
April 26	Tarentum Library -two students; one call.
May 1	Freeport Library.
May 3	Tarentum Library -three students; one call about her mother's application, "Will she receive book ?" Misconception there! Books were provided in eac library, but not to take out.

May 5	Article appeared in Valley News Dispatch about two more weeks left in Adult Study Series -information about testing, too. (See Final Product)
May 8-9	Telephone Survey -About half have still "stuck with it"; few never did any lessons; some followed along until it "got too hard"; some dropped the lessons when "I went back to work", "got busy on the house", or "family problems got in the way."
May 10	Tarentum Library -three students to tutor.
May 15	Freeport Library -one student-"I'll be back next week if I don't go up to my fishin camp."
May 17	Tarentum Library - two students. Joe told me he was so determined to pass this time that he spent "all last week whenever I could" at the library copying the GED math book! Tried to talk him into planning to come to class next fall -he needs the instruction. Am not hopeful for Joe.
May 22	Freeport Library
May 24	Tarentum Library -one student; one call about all lessons. Made arrangements to leave copies to be duplicated with librarian.
June 4	Practice Test at Freeport. Thirty registered -14 took the test. Only one of 14 didn't pass. Mr. Preisser spoke with students; answered questions; showed them the forms they will be filling out at actual test time; showed them sample of state issued diploma. This was both helpful and encouraging for the students. Some student comments about the test: "This is nothing like the lessons in the newspaper."; "I didn't think it would take this long!"; "Did I really pass?" Maybe more specific test information should be included in the newspaper as well as in the packets mailed.

ATTRACTING NEW STUDENTS AND ENROLLING THEM

Our first two objectives -that of reaching a formerly untapped audience with our offerings and that of "teasing" new members to existing classes -were successful.

The first objective was met in 244 new people contacted who were interested enough to return a coupon requesting an information packet. The ARIN staff felt that this was "overwhelming!" The Valley News Dispatch reported that within the first three weeks of the course's appearance, they received calls every day about the lessons. The second objective -that of "teasing" new members to existing classes was not as successful in numbers; however, there was a complete turnover in students by the beginning of April in the Freeport evening class, which resulted in a late spring enrollment at that class of 12. Previously, this class lost its demand by early May.

INDIVIDUALIZING THE APPROACH

A third objective of individualizing the approach to study was in some part effective, but in some part ineffective -in fact, inappropriate. Through offering a one-to-one situation in a non-threatening environment, some students were reached who might otherwise never have approached a class. Individual help in the quiet surroundings of the familiar community library appealed to four students in Freeport and to 12 students in Tarentum. The teacher recalls one young woman who talked about being so nervous that she asked her husband to accompany her for moral support.

Another young man had taken the test several times before and had never "got up the courage" to attend a class, even though he knew he hadn't much chance of succeeding on his own. Several people -in informal conversation -confessed that they were afraid to go to a class because they knew from past school experiences that they couldn't "get it." They would be embarrassed.

On the other hand, independent study and private tutoring was not the best for those people who needed the stimulation and encouragement of the group. (As in any class -but more especially in an adult education class where the atmosphere is invariably a positive, supportive one -students may learn as much from each other as from the teacher's instruction.)

MAKING THE COMMUNITY AWARE

The last objective of the project -that of making the public aware of adult education, in general, and ARIN's offerings, specifically -was very successful. The ARIN staff concluded that, "This is the best thing we've ever done." There were numerous comments from individuals in the education community -from adult educators through elementary teachers. One fifth grade teacher made it a habit of clipping the English lessons and posting them on a bulletin board for handy reference for her children. Individual comments came from friends and neighbors. "My mother has her diploma, of course, but she's saving all the lessons and going over all the stuff she's forgotten," one businesswoman reported.

The telephone survey also showed that people were paying attention; however, their response was not always favorable. One woman contacted was strident in her observation that, "When I went to school and you were told to subtract, you subtracted!" (She was referring to a math lesson on signed numbers.) Most of the people surveyed -while some admittedly not doing the lessons -were reading and saving them -"for when I have more time." Lastly, the biweekly appearance for 12 weeks of "ARIN Adult Learning Center" in a banner headline above each lesson was, in itself, invaluable publicity. This was especially true because the site of the project's impact was in the southernmost tip of Armstrong County, removed from the Adult Learning Center by 30 miles.

CONCLUSIONS

. The Newspaper Delivery of ABE/GED Materials was a good idea and a moderately successful project. There was certainly an enthusiastic reception from both the school districts involved and the newspaper. The initial response from enrollees was gratifying; however, the response of only thirty registrations for the practice test -after 244 had originally signed up for the course -was disappointing. However, the exposure in the daily newspaper was invaluable publicity for adult education; and, perhaps, not until next September's class begins, can the true success of the project be judged.

Mr. Paul Hess, Managing Editor of the Valley News Dispatch, said very early in a meeting that the course's success would depend upon its publicity. One recommendation to be made from this, in hindsight, is that frequent human interest features about students would creat enthusiasm for completing the lessons. Student "success stories" would be ideal!

**SURVEY FORM - GED Newspaper Course Telephone Survey Results

Sex
Male - 50%
Female - 50%

Age
Average - 42 years old

Are you doing the newspaper lessons?
Yes - 76%
No - 7%
Yes, but quit - 15%

Do you think you are making progress?
Yes - 46%
No - 15%
Others - various problems cited

What problems are you having with the lessons?
None - 8%
Others - "Signed numbers"; "Algebra"; "We think we're too old!"; "Math"; "Never seen some of this stuff!"

Do you plan to take the GED test upon completion of the course?
Yes - 58%
Not sure - 19%
No - 2%
Others - no response

Have you ever gone to a GED class anywhere?
No - 63%
Yes - 37%

Are you using any other materials to study?
No - 75%
Others - "Help from husband/wife"; encyclopedia; books at home; old notebooks

What other way can the Learning Center reach people?
Don't know - 70%
"Newspaper is a good idea" - 27%
Others - "Different times to accomodate shift work"; "People have to face up to it themselves"

What is your major reason for wanting the GED diploma?
"Improve job status" - 46%
Self - satisfaction - 27%
"For fun" - 8%

Are you a regular subscriber to the Valley News Dispatch?
Yes - 70%
No - 30%

** Total number of respondents equals 70.

June 28, 1983

Mr. William Hastings
Indiana Gazette
Ninth & Water Streets
Indiana, PA 15701

Dear Mr. Hastings:

I wish to thank you for taking the time to listen to the Adult Learning Center's proposal. We belive that a Home Study G.E.D. course would be beneficial to the entire community and hope that the Gazette will agree to publish the 25 lessons. These would be run twice a week filling approxi- one-third of a page. Registration coupons and publicity arti- cles would also be necessary a few weeks before the starting date of October 3rd.

If further information is required prior to your decision, please contact Susan Allan at the ARIN Adult Learning Center.

Sincerely,

Teresa Delaplane

Teresa Delaplane

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ATTACHMENT 2

Valley News Dispatch

GENERAL OFFICES • 210 FOURTH AVENUE • TARENTUM, PA 15084 • (412) 224-4321

Nov. 17, 1983

Ms. Sue Allan
Director
ARIN Adult Learning Center
220 N. Fifth Street
Indiana, PA 15701

Dear Ms. Allan:

This is to confirm my conversation yesterday with Kitty Lenz regarding the newspaper's interest in presenting ABE/GED curriculum materials.

I am enthusiastic about the possible participation of the Valley News Dispatch in the project, but the time frame Kitty outlined -- December through February -- is not opportune for us.

We would be pleased to participate with you in presenting the curriculum in the paper if you can extend your time frame to the period of March-April-May, 1984. At that time, we would be able to devote the appropriate space to both promotion and the lessons themselves.

I hope you will be able to secure the time extension because I believe this would be a vitally important project serving many people in the area.

Sincerely,

Paul Hess

Paul Hess
Executive Editor

GANNETT

THE VALLEY NEWS DISPATCH, A GANNETT NEWSPAPER, IS PRINTED BY THE NEWS PRINTING CO. WHICH ALSO PUBLISHES THE NORTH HILLS NEWS RECORD IN McCANDLESS TWP., • THE BUTLER COUNTY NEWS IN ZELIENOPLE, PA. AND • THE HERALD IN SHARPSBURG, PA.

ATTACHMENT 3

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
333 MARKET STREET
P. O. BOX 911
HARRISBURG, PA 17108

December 16, 1983

Susan K. Allan
ARIN Adult Learning Center
220 North Fifth Street
Indiana, PA 15701

Re: Contract No.: 98-4012

Dear Mrs. Allan:

I refer to your request for an extension of the timeline of the project, 98-4012, to June 30, 1984, in order to complete the project and meet the objectives.

In accord with the above, approval is given to extend from March 31, 1984, until June 30, 1984, without any request for additional funds.

Enclosed is a copy of the Interim Report containing the request: Objectives for the next half.

Sincerely,

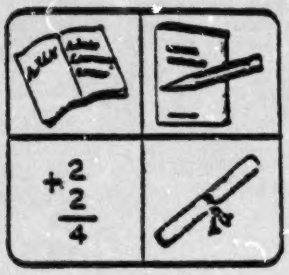
John Christopher

John Christopher, Ed.D.
Chief, Division of Adult
Basic Education

Enclosure

cc: J. DiIorio
Comptroller
File

ARIN ADULT LEARNING CENTER



220 North Fifth Street, Indiana, Pennsylvania 15701

Phone 412-463-8578

February 24, 1984

Dr. Edward Garlitz, Superintendent
Freeport Area School District
P.O. Drawer C
Freeport, PA 16229

Dear Dr. Garlitz:

Thank you for your interest and support of the ARIN Adult Learning Center's G.E.D. Newspaper Delivery Program. Twenty-four lessons in English and Mathematics skills will be published on Monday and Wednesdays in the Valley News Dispatch beginning March 5, 1984.

We would like to schedule an Official G.E.D. Practice Test during our regularly scheduled class time on Monday, June 4, 1984 from 6:30-9:30 PM as a culminating activity to the project. Coupons will be run in the paper on the 10th week of the 12-week course in order for us to determine the number of participants and materials necessary. Originally, the G.E.D. and ESL courses occupied Rooms 101 and 102. These rooms should provide adequate facilities for the test. However, if the response is overwhelmingly good - over 50 people - we would contact you for recommendations and suggestions for appropriate testing areas within the school.

Thank you again for your cooperation and interest in our programs to serve the educational needs of adults in the Armstrong County area.

Sincerely,

Susan K. Allan
Coordinator of Adult Services

Service Adult Education in Armstrong Indiana Counties

ATTACHMENT 5

FREEPORT AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Administration Building
621 South Pike Rd.
Post Office Drawer C
FREEPORT, PENNSYLVANIA 16229
412/295-5141

EDWARD H. GARLITZ, Ed.D.
Superintendent

LAWRENCE E. MARTIN, Ph.D.
Assistant to the
Superintendent

WILLIAM L. REILLY
Business Manager
Board Secretary

March 14, 1984

Ms. Susan K. Allan
Coordinator of Adult Services
ARIN Adult Learning Center
220 North Fifth Street
Indiana, PA 15701

Dear Ms. Allan:

I am writing to officially notify you that the Board of Directors of the Freeport Area School District, at their regular meeting held on March 13, 1984, approved your request on behalf of the ARIN Intermediate Unit to use one or more additional classrooms at the junior high school for special GED testing as may be required, at no charge and under the provision that it does not conflict with any other school approved activity.

If we can be of any further help, please do not hesitate to call my office.

Sincerely,

Edward H. Garlitz

Edward H. Garlitz, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

lc

cc: Mr. Prusick

"COMMITTED TO QUALITY EDUCATION"